

A study of teachers' paradigms of the "China Today" module in Hong Kong under one country and two systems.

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Abstract:

Background: During the period of British colonial rule, the nature of civic education in Hong Kong was characterized as denationalized, depoliticized and decontextualized. The 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration substantially altered the nature of civic education. The "China Today" module of Liberal Studies (LS) was one of the results of the re-engineering the civic education. The teachers' paradigms of the "China Today" module were explored because the module used national themes as materials to inculcate values in students and is directly related to both citizenship education and national education.

Aim: The aim of this study is to examine teachers' paradigms of the 'China Today' module through their conceptualization of citizenship and their perspective on teaching.

Samples: Four secondary teachers of the "China Today" module were invited to participate.

Methods: Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation were used to assess the teachers' perception and practices.

Results: Data from the questionnaire and interviews revealed that the four teachers highly valued moral, socially concerned citizens and democratic citizens. In terms of aims and approaches to citizenship education, the four teachers embraced the notion of citizenship as competence as aim and reflective-inquiry approach, but only two teachers were able to carry them out in the classroom setting. Another two teachers used transmission approach.

Conclusion: Framed by the notion of citizenship as competence as their aim and equipped in issue-enquiry or reflective-inquiry approach, and experienced in developmental perspective on teaching, the CSS2 and CSS3 teachers were able to cultivate in students' dispositions and skills. Teachers unaware of the citizenship framework and unfamiliar with the developmental perspective on teaching found it difficult to cultivate rational aspects of students.

Key words: Citizenship and developmental perspective on teaching.

在一國兩制下香港的「今日中國」課程的教師範式研究

游德生〔美國〕

摘要

背景：在英國統治期間，香港公民教育有以下的特色：就是課程不涉及祖國和政治，並且沒有脈絡。1984年，中英聯合聲明大大改變這本質。通識教育中的今日中國就是公民教育改革的成果之一。老師的典範與公民教育及國民教育息息相關。

目的：這項研究目的：透過公民概念及教學的觀點，來探究四位教授「今日中國」單元老師的典範。

調查對象：四位教授「今日中國」單元的老師。

調查方法：受訪者填寫問卷調查和接受訪問；研究員並在課堂上進行不參與觀察，然後將兩組資料作比較。

調查結果：問卷調查和訪問顯示四位老師偏向喜歡有道德、關懷社會，和民主的公民。從課堂上不參與觀察，四位老師都以提高公民能力為目標，但只兩位老師能有系統地以反思探究方法組織課堂活動。

總結：兩位較有經驗的老師以提高公民能力為目標，運用反思探究方法及發展角度教學組織課堂活動，故他們較有效地培養學生公民氣質及能力。

關鍵詞：公民教育及發展教學觀點。

Introduction

Background

After 155 years of colonial rule, Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997. During the period of colonial rule, the elitist/conservative ideology promoted by the Hong Kong colonial administration deliberately estranged the Hong Kong populace from their motherland and depoliticized educational discourse (Tse 1999). As a result, the nature of civic education was characterized as denationalized, depoliticized and decontextualized (Luk 1991; Tse 1999; Fairbrother 2003).

The 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration substantially altered the nature of civic education due to the expansion of civic society in Hong Kong, Hong Kong's democratic participatory political culture, and the emergence of a nationalistic ideology. The "China Today" module, one of the six modules of Liberal Studies (LS), implemented in 1992, was one of the results of the re-engineering the civic education to address the problems of denationalization, depoliticization, and decontextualization. With respect to the relationship between civic education and Liberal Studies, there are major shifts in Moral and Civic Education curriculum. For instance, the Economics and Public Affairs (EPA), a course of civic education, was replaced by an integrated course of Liberal Studies. Ideological/political/civic/virtue education was restructured into personal/social development. Instead of transmitting civic knowledge and value in civic education, the curriculum of the "China Today" module is structured around an enquiry into a range of contemporary and perennial issues affecting the contemporary China in order to cultivate skills and practice and to nurture an inquisitive/creative mind in students. Four "China

Today" module teachers were invited to participate in this study because the China Today module used national themes as materials to inculcate values in students and was directly related to both citizenship education and national education.

With respect to the paradigms of the teachers, according to Ronald W. Freeman, "Thomas Kuhn (1962) coined the term paradigm. A paradigm is a set of rules that (a) establish or define boundaries; and (b) tell one how to behave inside the boundaries so as to be successful" (Freeman, 2001). Before the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, the paradigm for civic teachers was molded and constrained by the policy of depoliticization. The transmission approach that the civic teachers adopted was designed to fit citizens into an established social and value system for the sake of maintenance, so civic teachers relies on textbooks, classroom instruction, and tests as tools of implementation (Lo and Man, 1996). Subject-matter considerations (academic needs) took precedence over individual wants and needs (personal needs) and national education and political-communal considerations (national needs), which were largely absent. After 1984, two emerging ideologies democratic participatory culture and nationalism came into play and challenge the paradigms of civic teachers. Since the implementation of Liberal Studies in 1992, the new paradigm has been that political-communal considerations should coexist with individual students' wants and needs and subject-matter considerations in the formal curriculum, even though the perceived curriculum of civic teachers was still dominated by subject-matter considerations.

Research Questions

The paradigms of the "China Today" module teachers are explored through the political-communal

considerations which are broken down into two constituent parts: perception of the characteristics of good citizenship and national attitude. The teachers' beliefs of good citizenship will definitely have an impact on their choice of aims and approaches to teaching, since "teaching is the visible expression of an underlying set of beliefs a teacher brings to the learning environment" (Pratt, 2005, 108) In the following research questions, the first question is the main focus of discussion, while the rest are not addressed in this paper.

1. The first research question is to explore and identify teachers' perception of the characteristics of good citizenship, along with their aims and approaches to citizenship education.
2. The second research question is to explore and identify teachers' national attitudes and their aims and approaches to informal and nonformal education.
3. The third research question seeks to identify and compare teachers' citizenship paradigms with Derek's Heater's notion of world citizenship.
4. The final research question seeks to explore and identify how the educational philosophy behind Liberal Studies impacts the paradigm of the teachers.

Research Methodology

Although this is a mixed-methods study involving both quantitative and qualitative instruments, this research is mainly qualitative. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation in formal, nonformal, and informal educational settings were employed along with text analysis. In terms of instrumentation, the study of citizenship comprised a questionnaire survey

and a follow-up face-to-face interview with each teacher. The title of the questionnaire survey is "The Characteristics of Good Citizenship Perceived by Teachers in Guangzhou, Hangzhou, and Hong Kong," devised by Lee Wing-on (Lee 1999). Respondents were given thirteen characteristics of good citizenship and asked to rank them according to their perception of their relative importance. Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the questionnaire survey. The main purpose of the interviews was to explore the teachers' conceptualization by allowing the respondents to elaborate on their choices. Next, non-participant observation was employed to find out the aims and approaches teachers used in the classroom to foster the characteristics of good citizens in their students and to check for parallels between teachers' perceptions and their practices.

Research Findings

Teachers' responses obtained in the interview were video-recorded, tape-recorded and transcribed for coding and analysis. The qualitative data for the first three choices and the last three choices for characteristics of good citizenship perceived by the respondents are tabulated in Table 1.

The results of the questionnaire were as follow: "concern for the welfare of others" and "tolerance of diversity within society" were chosen as the top three items most frequently, three and three times respectively; "fulfillment of family responsibility" occurred twice; "moral behavior," "ability to make wise decision," "ability to question ideas," and "acceptance of an assigned responsibility." Each choice was selected once only. With the exception of the CSS4 teacher, the teachers imposed preexisting conceptual categories on the characteristics of good citizenship.

Teachers' conception of citizenship demonstrated a strong social dimension and tended to prefer those characteristics associated with the socially concerned citizen such as "tolerance of diversity within society"

and "concern for the welfare of others." Socially concerned citizens and socially aware citizens were perceived positively.

Table 1

The Three Most Important Characteristics of Good Citizenship as Perceived by Teachers of the China Today Module

Ranking	CSS1	CSS2	CSS3	CSS4
First Choice	Moral Behavior	Concern for the welfare of others	Fulfillment of family responsibilities	Ability to question ideas
Second Choice	Fulfillment of family responsibilities	Tolerance of diversity within society	Concern for the welfare of others	Tolerance of diversity within society
Third Choice	Concern for the welfare of others	Ability to make wise decision.	Tolerance of diversity within society	Acceptance of an assigned responsibility

In terms of social values, the CSS1, CSS3 and CSS4 teachers all of whom were trained in Confucian heritage recalled a passage from the Great Learning (*Ta Hsüeh*) which provides the basic teaching on how man should see himself in relation to the social groupings and society that surrounds him, when they were asked to rank their choices:

When the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order, and when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world.

In other words, they all believed that if you order yourself then you can teach good principles to influence your family; regulate your family, to influence your nation. Fulfill your duties, and then you can teach good principles to both family and nation. The individual was envisaged as the center of a series of ever-expanding circles of relationships;

the family was regarded as the next layer of the concentric circles.

The CSS1 teacher ranked "moral behavior" highest, "fulfillment of family responsibilities" second, and "concern for the welfare of others" third. As noted earlier, these choices reflect and fit very well with his Confucian ideals.

The CSS2 teacher ranked "concern for the welfare of others" as most important, "tolerance of diversity within society" as second most important, and "ability to make wise decisions" as third most important. He appeared to have imposed a preexisting classification on the characteristics, regarding both knowledge and participation as behaviors. He explained:

Are there any attitudes behind all these behaviors? Attitudes are more fundamental than behaviors. A good citizen is one who should have an attitude of concern about the welfare of others, tolerance (of diversity within

society) and be able to discern right from wrong and have a sharp mind (these are the abilities and attitudes behind behaviors.) Maybe there are different factors/motives behind behaviors; that is why I rank behaviors last.

The CSS3 teacher categorized most of the characteristics into three groups: values, abilities, and knowledge. Both “patriotism” and “acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles” were regarded as duties. The values he advocated were “fulfillment of family responsibilities,” “concern for the welfare of others,” and “tolerance of diversity within society.” In another situation, he repeatedly told others that knowledge ranked lowest, abilities in the middle, and values highest in the teaching of Liberal Studies. Therefore, his ranking was quite consistent with his previous thinking pattern. Then he gave the rationale behind his choices:

The ranking I make reflects my belief in Confucian relationship as the highest, then those characteristics related to ability are grouped and ranked second, and characteristics related to knowledge are grouped and ranked third; those characteristics related to duties are ranked last. Although knowledge is the precondition of ability, without knowledge, ability will be greatly undermined. However, I still ranked ability higher than knowledge.

The most important characteristic of good citizenship as ranked by the CSS4 teacher was “ability to question ideas”; second, “tolerance of diversity within society”; third, “acceptance of assigned responsibility.” His first and second choices were consistent with his democratic values, but his third choice reflected his Confucian heritage. Here is his explanation of “acceptance of assigned

responsibility”:

The phrase ‘assigned responsibilities’ is not as an external constraint but an internal conscience. Let me illustrate with an example. If you are born as a son or a daughter in a family, you should accept and perform acts of filial piety, not in response to your parents’ or societal demands but in obedience to your conscience.

Their choices implied that it was dutiful and right to have a higher commitment to ingroups than to outgroups. Ingroups were also ranked differently in order of importance; for instance, CSS1, CSS3, and CSS4 put family ahead of all other ingroups. The family as the primary ingroup and social institution clearly had moral priority over any other social institution, group or organization. In other words, their social values reflected their cultural or collective values, but not necessary hierarchical values. Likewise, the CSS4 teacher expressed the same idea differently. This made sense because familial collectivism is deeply entrenched within Chinese culture. However, the CSS2 teacher did not distinguish between ingroups and outgroups.

Furthermore, with regard to their categorization, although the CSS1 and CSS3 teachers recognized and explicitly stated that their rankings were influenced by their Confucian philosophy, their categories and categorizations were different. The CSS1 teacher explained that his classification of all the characteristics fell into three categories: social/cultural values, participation, and choice in daily living; the former preceded the latter. The CSS3 teacher classified them into four categories: values, abilities, knowledge, and duties, with the former taking precedence over the latter. The CSS2 teacher sorted the characteristics of citizenship into two

categories: attitude and behavior, which combined knowledge and participation. The CSS4 teacher did not categorize, and unlike the others, his first three choices reflected a kind of tension between political values and cultural values. Thus, the perception of citizenship of the CSS1, CSS3, and CSS4 teachers was shaped by their Confucian training and upbringing; in other words, their political identity was infused with their cultural identity. However, the perceptions of the

CSS2 teacher did not reflect Confucian values. Table 3 shows the respondents' last three choices from the questionnaire.

As lowest priorities, "patriotism" and "acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles" were the ones most frequently chosen; "acceptance of an assigned responsibility," and "knowledge of world community," twice; "ability to question ideas" and "moral behavior," once.

Table 2

The Three Least Important Characteristics of Good Citizenship as Perceived by Teachers of the China Today Module

Ranking	CSS1	CSS2	CSS3	CSS4
Eleventh Choice	Ability to question ideas.	Moral Behavior	Knowledge of world community	Knowledge of world community
Twelfth Choice	Acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles	Acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles	Acceptance of an assigned responsibility	Patriotism
Thirteenth Choice	Acceptance of an assigned responsibility	Patriotism	Patriotism	Acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles

Patriotism was ranked differently according to the perception of the teachers. All distinguished a dual meaning of patriotism in one way or the other: love of motherland and loyalty to the state. The former was considered the broad meaning of patriotism; the latter, its narrow meaning. If the broad meaning of patriotism was considered, then patriotism would be ranked higher; for instance, patriotism was ranked fifth by the CSS1 teacher and sixth by the CSS3 teacher, and both teachers regarded the nation-state as a social relation. If the narrower meaning was considered, then it would be ranked close to the bottom. If the concept of nation was embodied as a regime, then the CSS1, CSS3, and CSS4 teachers would rank patriotism among the

last three choices. This is because according to the Confucian teaching: people are primary and the king or regime is secondary. Interestingly, all respondents discerned this dual meaning of patriotism, yet it seemed to me that all tended to decode a narrow meaning of patriotism.

The CSS2 teacher distinguished both the broad and narrow interpretations of patriotism. He embraced patriotism if it meant identification with an ethnicity. However, he would downplay patriotism if it was narrowly defined as loyalty to the state:

It (Patriotism) can be interpreted as situating yourself in a macro environment or identifying with an ethnicity. However,

now it can mean a political attitude or identification with the regime, which is the narrow meaning of patriotism. I don't want patriotism to be confined to such a narrow meaning. Some of the scholars reminded us that we can become critical patriots. Nevertheless, some (Beijing-loyalist) people regarded 'critical patriots' as not patriotic at all. I don't want the meaning of patriotism to be monopolized or labeled by some.

The CSS4 teacher associated patriotism with contemporary Taiwan, ancient China, and Fascist Germany, which all propagandized patriotism. He explained:

"I feel personal quality is the most important characteristic. To a certain degree, unlike the identity naturally and easily projected by family and schools, national identity is carefully constructed and therefore not natural at all. However, to a nation which is so distant [patriotism] is a constructed identity. Throughout this process of construction, it is unavoidable to mix with many political issues and values. I don't feel this is a good thing; that is why I don't rank patriotism high."

As for the "acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles," the CSS1 and CSS3 teachers saw it as a duty. They regarded it as a form of submission and associated it with subjecthood rather than citizenship. The CSS4 teacher commented on "acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles":

I feel this choice sounds like the traditional Chinese hierarchy (hierarchical human

relationship). I believe the modern citizen is different from the ancient subject. This characteristic "acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles" should not appear on the list of characteristics of good citizenship.

With respect to his last three choices, the CSS1 teacher ranked "ability to question ideas" eleventh, "acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles" twelfth, and "acceptance of an assigned responsibility," last. As mentioned earlier, the CSS1 teacher regarded these characteristics as choices made in daily living. His explanation reflected a constructive tension between hierarchical thinking and civil disobedience. He said:

(With respect to ability to question ideas) in order to question an idea, I need a known fact. If I don't have a known fact and keep questioning, then I become a skeptic. Skepticism is unfounded. Next, why should my acceptance of authority precede my assigned responsibilities? If I don't accept my supervisor's authority, I will not undertake my responsibilities. But if the request(s) from authority violates my job descriptions or morality, then I may or may not comply. Here I exercise "my ability to question ideas."

The CSS2 teacher ranked "moral behavior" eleventh, "acceptance of authority of those in supervisory roles" twelfth, and "patriotism" last. As noted, the CSS2 teacher was trained in social science. He was conscious of the difference between the civic and moral spheres in his ranking. He said:

Some moral behaviors may not be related to civic behaviors. The moral behavior

itself could be very important, but it should not be included in civic behaviors. On the other hand, if you require a citizen to exhibit certain moral behavior, this will be a value orientation. These value orientations will readily become irrefutable and become responsibilities of a citizen. [For example, homosexuality in the Chinese context is immoral, so a homosexual cannot be a citizen.] This is a discussion of our cultural and lifestyle attitude. If we list it as a characteristic of a citizen, then we make it very hard to discuss. We don't have space to discuss it. By the same token, patriotism is a value orientation. If you list it as a characteristic of a citizen, an attribute, a condition, then we don't have space to discuss it.

I asked the CSS2 teacher whether or not national education should be categorized as civic education. Is it difficult to reconcile the two? Will this create tension? Here is his response: "if the nation is running the western style of democracy, then it will not create conflict between national education and civic education." Based on this questionnaire, the CSS2 teacher's paradigm may be described as civic patriotism or critical patriotism. Like beauty, patriotism is in the eyes of its beholders!

Overall, although they used different rationales and framed the characteristics of good citizens differently, they generated similar patterns. They favored socially concerned citizenship and downplayed loyalty to the state. Individualism and collectivism coexist in every culture, but one tends to be dominant. The social values which the CSS1, CSS3, and CSS4 teachers advocated

were more Confucian and collective than those expressed by the CSS2 teacher. They tended to be particularistic, and therefore applied different value standards to members of their ingroups and outgroups. By contrast, the CSS2 teacher was more egalitarian and less hierarchical and tended to be universalistic, applying the same value standards to all. Unanimously, the teachers surveyed distinguished patriotism broadly and narrowly and did not show any loyalty or disloyalty to state. Despite their love of their motherland, they didn't have blind faith in their state or government.

In sum, these teachers' perceptions of good citizenship were more inclined to reflect sentiments attached to family, concern for others, and tolerance of others. Their perceived negative connotation of "obedient citizens" or "dutiful citizens" or "subjects," however, reflected Hong Kong's long tradition of a free economy. Like the findings of a study done in 1999, all respondents showed an inclination toward social concern, and they were negatively disposed toward obedience as a citizenship construct (Lee, 1999, 278). The responses to this first questionnaire showed that the teachers strongly valued socially concerned citizens who are moral and capable of questioning ideas and making wise decisions. Nevertheless, their rankings revealed that they did not envision submissive citizens who were loyal to the state. To further explore teachers' ideals of good citizenship, I will examine how they implemented their beliefs in the classroom setting.

Aforementioned, teachers' ideas of good citizenship will definitely have an impact on their choice of aims and approaches to teaching, since "teaching is the visible expression of an underlying set of beliefs a teacher brings to the learning

environment” (Pratt, 2005, p.108). After exploring the underlying beliefs of the teachers, I now turn to their aims and approaches to citizenship.

Alex Porter has argued that citizenship comprises three essential components (aims): the notion of citizenship as status, the notion of citizenship as volition, and the notion of citizenship as competence (Porter, 1996). Henry Giroux discerned three distinct approaches to citizenship education: a transmission approach, a reflective-inquiry approach, and a critical approach (Lo and Man, 1996). The notion of citizenship as status is usually implemented in the classroom setting through a transmission approach. The notion of citizenship as competence is usually implemented either through a reflective-enquiry approach or a critical approach; while the notion of citizenship as volition is usually implemented through informal and nonformal education.

From the data generated by the nonparticipant observation in the classroom setting, none of them aimed at the notion of citizenship as status and used critical approach. All teachers embraced the notion of citizenship as competence, but only the CSS2 and CSS3 teachers were able to make use of the reflective-inquiry approach. The CSS1 and CSS4 teachers used transmission approach.

Since issue-based enquiry approach in Liberal Studies is similar to reflective-inquiry approach, I will not discuss the transmission approach of the CSS1 and CSS4 teachers. In addition, both the CSS2 and CSS3 teachers employed reflective inquiry as their approach. Instead of describing both, I would like to focus on the CSS2 teacher who is able to use reflective-inquiry as his approach to achieve the notion of citizenship as competence as his aim.

The skills of locating information, information collection, information analysis, values-clarification, decision-making, communication, deliberation, and presentations attributes which are necessary for the consensus-building efforts of a democratic society used by CSS2 teacher in the classroom setting will be examined thoroughly. Then, the process of cultivating each skill will be further analyzed from an educational perspective. With regard to locating information, the CSS2 teacher reminded his students how to look for information:

Where to look for information? Go to the Wisenews, a website that the school has paid for, in your search for information. You were given a password. I know that if no homework is assigned to you, you will not log on and search for information. As a matter of fact, Wisenews is a very convenient and useful website. When you start your project, you will use it a lot. In order to accumulate experience, you must search Wisenews yourself and get acquainted with it.

With respect to information analysis, one way this teacher trained his students to be critical was through a worksheet entitled “Issue & Argument,” in which he defined and distinguished terms like issue, argument, reason, conclusion, and value or assumption. An issue is a controversial event or problem. He listed three characteristics of an argument: (a) an argument is used to persuade; (b) it may not be justified or it may mislead, so it should be criticized; (c) it is composed of a reason and a conclusion. A reason is the basic evidence which supports the conclusion. The conclusion is the message that the author wants others to accept.

Finally, a value or an assumption is the belief or principle used to rank the priority of reasons.

Several examples were given to illustrate how to identify these terms. This exercise could be applied to the process of information analysis and eventually to the task of values-clarification. One of the examples given in the "Issue & Argument" worksheet was as follows:

The world population has been increasing rapidly. If people keep using nonrenewable resources to generate electricity, nonrenewable resources will soon be depleted. Therefore, future energy utilization will be focusing on renewable energy. As a result, using renewable energy will become a world trendy.

- Is it an argument?
- Conclusion: using renewable energy will Soon become a world trend.
- Reason: Nonrenewable energy will soon be depleted.
- Value or assumption: _____

Since it is integral to locating and collecting information, the credibility of the news was also analyzed and examined in terms of facts and opinions. I observed that the CSS2 teacher spent a great deal of time scaffolding students' thinking by using both supporting interpretative and evaluative questioning in his discussion. His role in the discussion was clear: early on, he demonstrated how to help students "to clarify without the teacher doing all the clarification." He structured questions that provided strategies for an evaluative stance toward text meaning. He asked what the author might mean. Then he asked students

to consider, "Do you agree with that?" Miller said, "Questioning the text in this way and publicly sharing even vaguely formed responses became a habitual approach for students in the class" (Miller, 2003, 296). Here is how the CSS2 teacher started the dialogue with students about the relationship between Taiwan and the PRC:

CSS2: Here I have picked up news about Beijing and Taiwan. I want you to find out or sort out what the fact is and what the opinion(s) is. Facts are what happened. Opinion is a viewpoint, and opinion does not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of an author. It could be opinions circulated within the society. Perhaps they are the opinions of the Beijing government and/or the Taiwan government. We must separate facts from opinions. Let us try to sort out facts from opinions. Break into groups to practice. What I want is to use what you have learned before and current events taking place now. After exploring, in terms of development and relations on both sides, what issue is worthwhile for us to explore further? Realistically, these may be questions you will encounter in your public examination. Secondly, the question you formulate gives you a chance to restructure the information that you have learned. Your questions give you an opportunity to use what you have learned on the issue of Taiwan and Beijing. See whether you can organize the fragmented news in your daily life. You encounter fragmented news all the time, so how can you organize it into a whole? Now let's focus on the first paragraph. What is fact in this paragraph? Let's look at one sentence at a time: "The problem of Taiwan is the

most difficult task in terms of unification for the new leadership in PRC.” Is this fact or opinion?

Student: (students were reading the worksheet. (After 5 second, one says) Opinion

CSS2: Opinion. Why?

Student: Indistinct answer.

This issue of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait illustrated how the CSS2 teacher guided students to analyze complex wholes into their component parts, to evaluate the adequacy of evidence to support conclusions, and to validate arguments in terms of their objectivity and freedom from bias or prejudice. First, he started from the first line of the text: “The problem of Taiwan is the most difficult task in terms of unification for the new leadership of the PRC.” Then he raised a question “Is this fact or opinion?” in a manner that suggested the text needed to be responded to and puzzled over. He allowed long pauses. His supporting evaluative questioning then followed, when he perceived that students needed more help; he supplied clues for them to explore and interpret. He began one discussion this way:

CSS2: Let’s discuss this statement: “The problem of Taiwan is the most formidable challenge in terms of unification for the new leadership in PRC.” (Is it) Fact or opinion? (He paused and students were pondering) Let me ask further. What do you know in this statement? What is unknown to you in this statement? Tell me some more. Even indistinct/ obscure/ vague answer. Do you feel you need to clarify any words or phrase in the sentence? What are they?

Student: Unification between China and Taiwan.

CSS2: (CSS2 writes “unification between China and Taiwan” on the board). It is still too broad.

Students’ indistinct voices were in the classroom.

CSS2: What aspects are involved in the Taiwan problem or unification between China and Taiwan? You may think of factors affecting the society, economics, and politics of Taiwan. The Taiwan problem is a huge problem and involved with the above aspects of Taiwan society. How about the new leadership of the PRC? Do you feel OK about them? (Do you understand what they meant?) Who are they? Good. “The most formidable challenge” what do you want to ask about this phrase? Is there some information missing?

The CSS2 teacher mediated specific interpretive strategies for helping the students to understand together by raising questions that structured a movement back and forth from students’ own experiences and responses to the written text. The strategy of his mediation of these routines for meaning-making was evident in the sequence of his questions during the class discussion. After a while, as students began to warm up and participate, the CSS2 teacher followed up on their responses until one student detected that the discussion was off-track. I was shocked by the fact that the CSS2 teacher seemed to be led off-track by the students’ responses, but the CSS2 teacher used this student’s response to put the discussion back on track. These students felt their developing sense of interpretive authority most sharply when they pursued student-generated questions together.

- CSS2: Why is it the most formidable challenge? Why. What is the viewpoint here?
- Student: (silent for three seconds) Why is it the most formidable challenge? It is because it would involve the US.
- Student: Other problems could be negotiated, but not this one. (Indistinct voice mentions that the US sides with Taiwan.)
- CSS2: If someone asks, why is it the most formidable challenge? China faces many other thorny issues. Give me examples. What are the thorny issues that China has encountered?
- Student: Energy, population
- Student(s): (This student detected that the discussion was off-track) Sir, it is about national unification.
- CSS2: Right, national unification. Good, what is the thorniest issue? Other things being constant, what are the challenges in terms of unification?
- Student: (Several students said) Tibet
- Student: Tibet is settled.
- CSS2: OK. Tibet is now part of the PRC.
- Student: Taiwan is also part of the PRC, but people in Taiwan want to be independent.
- CSS2: What is the difference between Taiwan and Tibet?
- Student (female): Taiwan is not inside, but outside of the PRC.
- Student (male): Taiwan is like a nation. She has her own finance, military, so the PRC cannot control Taiwan.
- CSS2: Taiwan is a political entity. In reality, she runs as a country. How about Tibet? What is the current situation of Tibet?
- Student (female): Chinese delegates were sent there to control it. Therefore, Tibet is controlled by the PRC.
- After analyzing complex wholes into their component parts, the CSS2 teacher guided his students to evaluate the adequacy of evidence to support conclusions and the validity of arguments in terms of their objectivity and freedom from bias or prejudice. He guided students in learning how to test the validity of arguments by relating cause to effect and evidence to conclusions. After finishing the first sentence, he led students to explore the next sentence. Right after he finished reading the sentence, a student asked him to clarify: "what does it mean, 'flexible and pragmatic perspective?'" He modeled probing strategies for responding to alternative perspectives, asking students to clarify what they said. He employed supporting interpretive questioning. He even led his students to explore impractical perspectives which were not relevant to the text. Gradually, he listened to students more than he talked; his role in the discussion was clearly defined as that of a facilitator.
- CSS2: Next sentence, Hu Jintao adopted a flexible and pragmatic perspective to deal with the Taiwan problem.

- Student: What does it mean flexible and pragmatic perspective?
- Student: Do something, not just talking. (Some students were speaking indistinctly).
- CSS2: Pragmatic policy. What is its implication?
- Student: Beijing will continue seeking ways to unify. Behaviors and actions will be adopted.
- CSS2: Why do you describe these behaviors or actions as pragmatic?
- Student: Before the Beijing government just proclaimed, talk only.
- CSS2: If Beijing decided to use military force, is it a flexible and pragmatic policy?
- Student: They will not start the fight.
- Student: The US then will side with Taiwan. It creates a bigger problem.
- Student: If Beijing decided to use force, the people in Taiwan would abhor the Beijing government.
- CSS2: Using military force for reunification. You do not only want to have reunification. You want people happy after reunification. Like HK.
- perspective thinking on an issue. Here was one of his assignments.
- CSS2: Your first homework is to look for three different articles either from the internet or newspapers about 3-3-4 [referring to the structure of the Hong Kong educational system]. One is from a governmental standpoint; that is, from government officials, departments, or organizations. How do you search for this? If I want to search for a governmental standpoint, how do I find it? (He waits for students' response).
- Student: Go to the Educational Department.
- CSS2: Good. Remember I want an article(s). (He then stands next to the blackboard) I wonder whether you know this or not—the government nowadays will publish an article in the newspaper to proclaim the governmental standpoint. After publishing this in the newspaper, they will upload the same article(s) on the governmental website. Therefore, you can find it on the website of the Educational Department or in newspapers.
- CSS2: (CSS2 opens the newspaper) What are you going to search?
- Student: The name of the author.
- CSS2: (repeating what the student said) the name of the author. What about the other two perspectives? Both come from the populace. One agrees with the governmental standpoint, and the

After differentiating facts from opinions, the CSS2 teacher turned to multi-perspective thinking, which is integral to information analysis and values-clarification. Various kinds of class-work were designed to arouse and sensitize students' multi-

other disagrees with the governmental standpoint. After you find them, your homework is to bring in the three articles you sought.

Instead of asking students to do newspaper cuttings as homework, the CSS2 teacher required his students to watch Hong Kong-produced TV documentaries related to China. They were supposed to do three things: (a) simply record the themes or outline of the documentaries, (b) identify the producer's stance from the TV documentaries, and (c) to write a brief report on what they learned, reflected, or felt.

Furthermore, the CSS2 teacher designed a worksheet to guide and consolidate what students had learned. For instance, eight viewpoints on an educational issue were listed on the worksheet, and the students were asked to classify them into two sides and discern the different rationales and values behind each viewpoint. Again, he used supporting evaluative questioning such as "support or not support?" A great deal of time was spent in dialogue, discussion, and deliberation. From the CSS2 teacher's perspective, deliberation deepens students' knowledge. Without such deliberation, most of his students' answers would be short-term, wrong, or superficial.

Cartoons were another good vehicle to help students practice various skills: viewpoint identification, data analysis and values-clarification. The CSS2 teacher asked students to identify the viewpoint of the author or cartoonist. For instance, describe the stance of the cartoonist. Do you agree with his stance? What is the message(s) embedded in the cartoon? What is the irony the cartoonist

expressed? Are there any messages about this issue missing? What are they?

After this accumulation of exercises, dialogues, and deliberation on an issue, the closing activity normally is either a presentation or a debate. For presentations, a group of five students presented a diagnosis of the relationship between Japan and China, while another group of four was supposed to comment on the presentation afterwards. The topic the presenters chose was the foreign policy toward China adopted by three Japanese prime ministers. They started with a list of controversies between Japan and China. The conflicts were as follows: history textbooks, the Diaoyutai (Senkaku Islands) dispute, Yasukuni Shrine visits, the Rape of Nanking, and oil fields in the East Sea.

Then they proceeded to illustrate how each Japanese prime minister approached the PRC and the US differently, and how his approach reflected the relationship between the US and the PRC. They started with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, then, Shinzo Abe, and finally Yasuo Fukuda. The students' presentation was quite eloquent. The CSS2 teacher sat at the back to jot down notes on their presentation. Since they mentioned that the general secretary of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had visited Japan, and the Japanese Prime minister reciprocated by visiting China, the CSS2 teacher added this to the list of the broad factors affecting the Sino-Japanese relationship. After the presentation, the CSS2 teacher asked the group of four to comment on the presentation. Both groups exchanged their ideas. After the exchange, the CSS2 teacher affirmed the issues they summarized and asked them to draw a concept map on the board to conclude the presentation.

Overall, the citizenship skills and abilities which the CSS2 teacher has been trying to cultivate in students included skills of information collection, information analysis, values-clarification, decision-making, communication, deliberation, presentations, and debates. In sum, the CSS2 teacher was implementing a reflective-inquiry approach, with citizenship as competence as his aim. Not only was he trying to equip students to be socially informed citizens, but also to be independent and critical thinkers. This is the context employing the zone of proximal development, and the CSS2 teacher used worksheets and issues, a dialogical approach intended to help students internalize the necessary psychological tools. His performance illustrated the role of human mediator as defined in Vygotsky's theory:

The role of the human mediator is defined in Vygotsky's (1978) theory through the notion that each psychological function appears twice in development, once in the form of actual interaction between people, and the second time as an inner internalized form of this function. The focus was transition of the function from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal plane. (Kozulin, 2003, p.19)

To function as citizens, the CSS2 teacher believed that his students needed to learn to seek out and validate the facts relevant to a decision or a given set of questions. They need to consider facts and reject ungrounded claims. "At the same time, they need to learn to look at all factual claims with a critical eye. Engle and Ochoa argued, "It is probably more important for young citizens to master the ways

of judging the reliability of so-called facts than it is for them to remember the facts themselves" (Engle and Ochoa, 1988, p.55).

The constructivist theory this teacher used to underpin his reflective-inquiry approach and his notion of citizenship as competence produced his dominant pedagogy to cultivate competence. This teacher's attributes include personal warmth, high quality verbal instruction (questions, explanations, direct relinquishment) breaking down the task into its components, and allowing students to struggle (Neal, 1995). When seeking to cultivate values-clarification skills in his students, either through text or cartoons, he used what Suzanne M. Miller describes as "supporting evaluative questioning" (e.g. "Is this fact or opinion," "what might the author mean?" "Do you agree with what the author said") in order to provide students with strategies to develop an evaluative stance toward the text's meaning (Miller, 2003). His use of supporting interpretive and evaluative questioning and discussion helped students to clarify the meaning of the text, to identify the viewpoints and arguments of the author and the stakeholders, to supply what is missing from the text, and to examine the conclusions or claims the author made.

In terms of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), he used pause and modeled probing strategies to elicit alternative perspectives, asking students to clarify what they said ("So are you saying...?") He used discussion to shape thinking by structuring a movement back and forth between students' own experiences and their responses to the written text. Consequently, he was able to integrate and deepen students' understanding of current events and to internalize the skills and values provided in class.

With respect to his use of pauses, the CSS2 teacher showed a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, which expressed itself in lower levels of anxiety, less need for formal rules and claims of absolute truth, and greater tolerance for people or groups with deviant ideas and behavior. Silence was used to nurture a higher sense of uncertainty avoidance.

What is more, the CSS2 teacher's willingness to provide clues demonstrated how he used the zone of proximal development (ZPD), to deepen his students' understanding of current events and to internalize the skills and values provided in class. In other words, this teacher viewed knowledge and skills as inseparable.

Conclusion

Fear is everywhere. When I attended a seminar about teaching the China Today module in 2003, I heard a lot of prospective teachers expressing their misgivings concerning the conflicts of values, aims, purposes, and interests. There is fear associated with authority, as teachers ask themselves how they should manage their discussion of Chinese patriotism and democratization. How can the need for building an identity consistent with Hong Kong's reunification with China be reconciled with the gradual democratization process that has characterized Hong Kong recent years (Grossman, 2004)?

How do these teachers handle the pressure of the public exam (AL) towards their teaching strategies? Since the scope of the China Today module was extremely broad, teachers are not able to cover every issue in contemporary China. All of my informants have to find ways to cope with the pressure from the Advanced Level public examination. The CSS1

and CSS4 teachers unfamiliar with the issue-enquiry approach choose to resort to transmission approach predominantly. Not only because they are content expert of Chinese Language and Culture, Chinese history, and Chinese philosophy, but also because they can efficiently deliver the content knowledge and values. Consequently, they tried to cover as many issues as possible.

However, facing the same pressure from the public examination, the CSS2 and CSS3 teachers, although sometimes use transmission approach, choose to implement the issue-enquiry approach or the reflective inquiry approach. They believed that once their students acquire and master the skills, the students can apply those skills to other issues. They shifted the focus from knowledge to skills or practices and from transmission of knowledge and values to developing an inquisitive or creative mind in students. They were changing the content and teaching methods to promote students' thinking, feeling, and practice of "right" behaviors, enlarging the world of the adolescents, including self, with others, the society, and the country, and allowing individual differences instead of deriving only one right answer.

"Teaching is the visible expression of an underlying beliefs a teacher implements in the learning environment (Pratt, 2005, p.108)". Based on the questionnaire, the four teachers' first and last three choices revealed that they highly valued morally and socially concerned citizens and democratic citizens. This was confirmed by their classroom teaching. They were fully aware of the ripple effect of economic reforms not only on the systems and structures of the PRC, but also on the livelihood of

its citizens. As a result, the issues they selected and focused were used to arouse students' social and moral concern. Classic citizens who are submissive and loyal to the state were not perceived as good citizens, but democratic citizens who are moral and critical of the state were regarded as good citizens. Except for the CSS1 teacher, I observed the CSS2, CSS3, and CSS4 teachers preparing students to be democratic citizens who are analytical, independent, and critical thinkers in the classroom. The students were being equipped to be critical in their thinking. The CSS2 and CSS3 teachers led students to discern the structure of an argument, differentiate facts from opinions, and to identify the beliefs and values behind each perspective. Students were engaged in thinking from multi perspectives, which is integral to information analysis and values-clarification. The reflective-inquiry approach and developmental perspective of teaching were fully embodied in both the CSS2 and CSS3 teachers' pedagogy.

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